

REMARKS

Claims 10–12 are pending in this application. The claims stand rejected for being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that is regarded as the invention and as being anticipated. The individual rejections will be addressed below in the order presented in the Office Action.

Support for Claim Amendments

The amendments presented above have been made to recite particular features of the inventions so as to expedite the prosecution of the present application to allowance in accordance with the USPTO Patent Business Goals (65 Fed. Reg. 54603, September 8, 2000). These amendments do not represent an acquiescence or agreement with any of the outstanding rejections.

Claims 10–12 are amended herein to more particularly define the invention. Support for these amendments can be found throughout the specification and in the claims as originally filed. These amendments have been made to put this application in better condition for allowance and raise no new issues, and Applicants respectfully request entry thereof. The remaining issues under 35 U.S.C. § 112 and §102 are addressed below.

I. Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 10–12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that Applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 10–12 are amended herein to recite, “wherein said feed pipe is connected to a flow path between an end of said injector connected to said reaction vessel and the suction port...” in order to clarify the subject matter of the invention.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the instant claims satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C § 112, second paragraph and respectfully request that the rejections on this basis be withdrawn.

II. Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 10–12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,931,260 to Molerus et al.

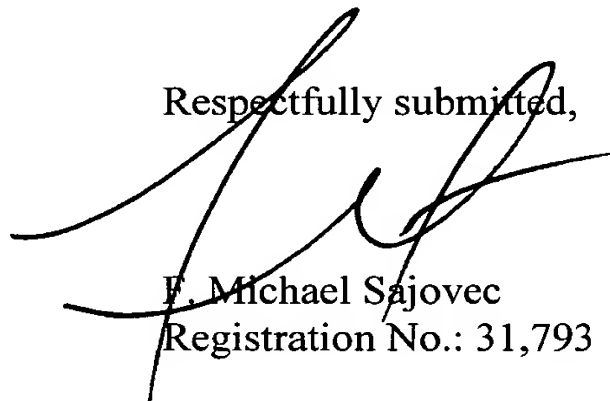
The '260 patent does not anticipate claims 10–12 as amended. Regarding the embodiments of claims 10–12, at best the '260 patent discloses a fluidized bed reactor in which a recycling conduit **11** is connected to a connecting portion **16** which is intended to communicate with the narrowest part of the injector **7**. The '260 patent does not disclose or suggest the feed pipe being connected to the reaction vessel and the suction port of the injector for supplying water and sodium hydroxide therethrough as described in element c) of the invention. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

IV. Conclusions

The points and concerns raised by the Examiner in the outstanding Office Action have been addressed in full, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining concerns, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned Attorney to expedite the prosecution of this application to allowance.

Applicants believe that no fee is due at this time. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0220. Should the Examiner have any small matters outstanding of resolution, he is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at 919-854-1400 for expeditious handling.

Respectfully submitted,

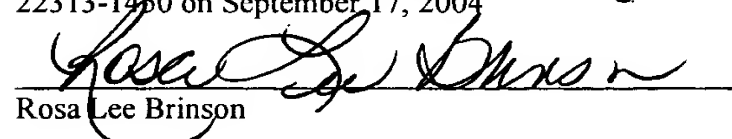


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